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EVENTS IN THE UKRAINE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, Ukraine is a country that was at one time a satellite of the Soviet Union, and 10 years ago it moved towards its own independence. Our President, Ronald Reagan, stood before the world and said, "Tear down that wall." And when the wall fell there were so many nations across the Soviet Union who became free, and Ukraine was one of those nations.

Ukraine, in declaring its independence, established the rights of its citizens, the same rights that are the bedrock of our democracy here in America. Freedom of speech, the right to assemble, freedom of press, are rights that have been granted to the people of Ukraine, and they are rights that have been fundamental to the unfolding of democracy in that country.

A few months ago, a Ukrainian journalist by the name of Heorhiy Gongadze, remember that name, it is an unusual name, but remember it, Heorhiy Gongadze, a Ukrainian journalist who challenged the government of his country, as journalists do here every day, Georgiy Gongadze was found dead. His head was cut off. His hands had their fingerprints removed, obviously with acid, and his hand was protruding from the shallow grave that his body had been put in.

After that, tapes were discovered, tapes that had been recorded by a member of the Presidential security staff in Ukraine, tapes were discovered that had the voice of the President of Ukraine on those tapes, although the government denies it is his voice, and the President of the Ukraine was calling upon someone to get rid of this journalist; very clear implications here, very clear implications that the President of a free nation was involved in calling for the demise of a reporter who later on turned up dead with his head cut off and his fingerprints obliterated.

As a result of this despicable crime, freedom-loving people in Ukraine began to protest: protest the government, protest what happened in the attack on the free press. They set up, as a symbol of their protest, a series of tents that went for a couple hundred yards down the main street of Kiev, the capital city. It was very impressive to see, and it was a protest that came from all levels of Ukrainian culture and society, from young and old, from the political left and the political

right, from the political center, from nongovernment organizations, members of the media, and from members of the Ukrainian Rada, all involved in this protest.

The protests had been going on in this tent city for 2 months. A U.S. congressional delegation led by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON), a delegation that I was proud to be a member of, visited Ukraine last week, and we met with members of the press who expressed their concern about freedom of the press, about the chilling effect which the murder of this reporter had on free press in Ukraine.

We met with members of the nongovernment organizations who expressed concern about this tendency to drift away from democracy that the government had shown. We went, and some of us visited this tent city and actually talked to the people.

We had the opportunity to meet with the President of Ukraine in a 2-hour-and-15 minute meeting. During that meeting, the President assured us that he stood for freedom of press, that he stood for freedom of speech, that he stood for the right of assembly, those same rights that we know so well, those same rights that were accorded to the people of Ukraine.

We were asked by the media before we left, what would happen if, after we left, these tents came down? Because it was thought that our presence there discouraged any effort to remove the tents.

We found out the answer today, because once the congressional delegation left, the government ordered the police to remove the tents, protesters arrested, tents thrown in the truck. An area known as Independence Square is boarded off in Ukraine, boarded off, a statue of St. Michael sitting in the middle of that square that is boarded off, and people cannot even gather together.

There will be consequences, I say to President Kuchma, for his denial of the right of assembly and freedom of speech in his country. The international community is watching. The whole world is watching.

ROLE MODELS AND BLACK HISTORY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. ROSS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, promoting awareness of black history throughout the month of February allowed all of us an opportunity to not only learn from the past, but also remind ourselves and others about the importance of practicing acceptance and inclusion. However, while black history is recognized in February, it does not stop today, on March 1. If it truly is history in February, it is also history in March

through January. That is why I decided to make these remarks today, rather than in February.

I am pleased that our Nation has chosen to recognize and celebrate the history of the African American culture. History teaches us that every culture and every society endures good and bad, and it is essential that we continue to learn from our past.

From the days of early American statehood, when African Americans like Harriet Tubman and many others fought to gain freedom from slavery, to the inspiring civil rights movement fostered by the determination of individuals such as Rosa Parks, Daisy Bates, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to our current times today, African Americans have played a vital role in America's history.

Last month, as we celebrated Black History Month, I was reminded of how the contributions of African Americans have had a particular influence on my life. Growing up during the 1960s and 1970s in south Arkansas in small towns like Emmet, Hope, and Prescott, I was fortunate to be among the first generation to attend integrated public schools.

Those were difficult times for our Nation, but as the son of public school educators, I was taught early on that blacks and whites could live and work together and value each other's differences.

As many small schools did at that time, our elementary school in Emmet combined two grades in each classroom. The teachers had close relationships with the students, and had a profound influence on our young lives.

I remember that two particular teachers played a special role in my upbringing as a young student, perhaps because they were both African American, or perhaps because they were simply warm, caring individuals. Their names were Velma Rowe and Corrine Gilbert.

Ms. Rowe and Ms. Gilbert always went the extra mile to make a difference in our lives as students, whether it was providing encouragement when we were having trouble keeping up, guidance and discipline when we stepped out of line, or congratulations for a job well done.

I may have been too young at that time to fully understand the history of racial inequality in our country, but looking back, they gave me a special insight into the important role of African Americans in our community and in our society. The impact of their example as teachers and as leaders in the African American community helped to shape my view, as I grew older, that we must all work together to accept each other and respect our differences.

In class, Ms. Rowe and Ms. Gilbert taught all of us that we were each important as individuals, no matter what our race or background, no matter

whether we were rich or poor, and that we must show respect for all those around us. They instilled in us the value of a good education, and that, with hard work, determination, and a good heart, we could build a better world.

On Sunday, February 18, my wife, Holly, and our two children, Sydney Beth and Alex, joined me in attending the black history program at Greater Pleasant Hill Baptist Church in Arkadelphia, Arkansas. I had the privilege of participating with African Americans, young and old, in the program, which highlighted historical accomplishments of African Americans, named by using each letter of the alphabet from A to Z.

The service was a great opportunity for my family and me to reflect on how far we have come in the last 150 years towards the goal of racial harmony in this country, and yet, how far we still have to go in the continued battle for civil justice.

As I told Pastor Lewis Shepherd's congregation following the program, we must continue to reflect on black history throughout the year as we work together to foster greater understanding so that we can bridge the racial gaps that still exist in today's world.

I can only imagine what it was like for Ms. Rowe and Ms. Gilbert when they were growing up in the segregated South, and what challenges and obstructions they had to face each and every day.

As adults, they used their lives and experiences to bring people together and to serve as role models for me and so many students. Our challenge is to be the Ms. Rowes and Ms. Gilberts of today.

THE SITUATION IN UKRAINE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to continue the efforts started by my colleagues here this afternoon regarding the situation in Ukraine.

I just had the pleasure of leading a delegation to Russia, Ukraine, and Moldova, where our primary purpose was to reestablish strong ties with the people of those three countries; to announce, specifically in Ukraine, the establishment of a new interparliamentary dialogue between the Rada and the American Congress.

While meeting in Ukraine, we were scheduled to have a 30-minute meeting with the President of that country, President Kuchma. The meeting lasted for 2 hours and 15 minutes because of the current turmoil in Ukraine relative to the murder and the atrocities committed against a reporter, and the evi-

dence that some have put forth indicating a tape with supposedly or allegedly President Kuchma's voice ordering the assassination of the reporter.

In our meeting with President Kuchma, we pleaded with him that Ukraine had to abide by the rule of law and had to maintain the freedom of the press in this investigative process. We offered the support of our Federal Bureau of Investigation to the Ukrainian government to fully investigate this incident, so that everyone in the world would know the facts about this particular incident.

President Kuchma accepted that offer of the cooperation of our FBI.

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We stressed with President Kuchma the need to maintain the rule of law, as well as protect the freedom of those to speak out who were in disagreement with his government.

He reaffirmed the commitment to those principles with the seven-member delegation that was a part of this trip. Today we find out, Mr. Speaker, that the Ukrainian government has shut down the basic first amendment rights of the people of that country to speak out. There had been a peaceful protest set up in downtown Kiev, where people from all walks of life in Ukraine were protesting what they felt was inadequate response by the government to this incident.

While we reaffirmed to President Kuchma that we were not there to try to impose our will on the people of Ukraine, it was absolutely essential that the rights guaranteed by any democracy under a Constitution such as that which Ukraine is now under be held up and be maintained.

It is absolutely devastating that today we hear that Ukraine has taken a step in the wrong direction. Mr. Speaker, this is not good news for America. It is not good news for Ukraine, nor the Ukrainian people.

I call upon President Kuchma and the Ukrainian government as friends of Ukraine wanting to support more enhanced cooperation to reestablish the basic principles of a free democracy, to reestablish the principles of freedom of speech and freedom of assembly, to reestablish the principle of the rule of law, to have a full and complete investigation of the murder of Mr. Gongadze wherever it might lead.

Unfortunately, if these steps are not taken, my prediction is that this Congress will act to send a signal to Ukraine that we are not happy with the steps that are being taken to reverse the progress that Ukraine has achieved over the past several years.

Mr. Speaker, as a friend of Ukraine and a friend of the Ukrainian people, I plead with President Kuchma to live up to the standards that he affirmed to the seven-member congressional delegation for his country, because the

word received today does not coincide with what President Kuchma told us he would do as the leader of that great Nation.

PROBLEMS WITH ILLEGAL NARCOTICS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMMONS). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. SOUDER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, this afternoon and this evening I would like to talk about our problems with illegal narcotics. We have a new President. We have a new Congress.

I have recently, as of 2 weeks ago, been named chairman of the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy, and Human Resources that deals with both the authorizing and the oversight on the narcotics question. Today I would kind of like to lay out where we are likely to head this year and some of the fundamental issues that we will be addressing.

This subcommittee has been headed by former Congressman Bill Zeliff, by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT), the Speaker of the House, by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MICA), and we have been working together since the Republicans took over Congress to put an aggressive plan together with how to deal with drug abuse in America.

What we saw in 1992 to 1994 was such a dramatic rise in drug abuse in America that since 1994 we would have to have a reduction of 50 percent among young people to get back to where we were in 1992. We had been making steady progress for over a decade, but two events, in my opinion, set the whole chart in the wrong direction.

One was we cut our interdiction budget and let the drugs pour into our country, which gave a cheaper supply on the street in more purity and potency to the illegal narcotics.

Secondly, the messages were sent in our culture, including at the top of our political structure, that hey, I did not inhale, kind of joked around about drug abuse. We saw such a dramatic rise.

Let me repeat that, in 2 years drug abuse in America soared so much in 1992-1994 that among young people it would take a 50 percent reduction to get back to where it was the first 2 years of the Clinton administration.

Let me explain a couple of things, because I am going to talk more in detail tonight about interdiction. We just had a delegation, a congressional delegation, that went to an antinarcotics conference in Bolivia. We were there for several days, as well as in South America and the former landing operations that we have now to replace Panama. And I am going to get into